

January 31, 1979

Professor Freeman Dyson
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Dear Freeman:

Thank you for the opportunity to read the draft of Chapter 15. The primary result of the reading is to make me look forward to reading Chapters 1 through 14 and 16 through the end. As I had begun to learn in other contexts, one person's ego trip can be another's exciting voyage.

I am enclosing the draft. On pages 16 and 17 you will find some suggestions. At least in my view, they are primarily concerned with making the facts more accurate.

After I have read the book I know that there will be many things to discuss further. For example, I have not experienced the anguish you speak of when facing the implications of modern biology. Nothing I know of in biology threatens my own notions of human identity or uniqueness, quite the reverse. Biology teaches us that each species is indeed unique and this reinforces our sense of brotherhood and responsibility. As for mutability.... we have been mutable since the beginning and knew that in many ways. What is different is that we are beginning to understand one of the mechanisms for mutability. Other mechanisms of mutability, depending on culture, have been understood and manipulated for millennia.

I agree with you about sanity. But insanity is rampant without biological understanding. The important thing about Dr. Moreau and Adolph Hitler is insanity. It is true that power increases the dangers inherent in insanity and for that reason as knowledge brings power it can be dangerous. But that is not really a new problem. For me, the central issue is probably power itself.

Well, that's a beginning. I look forward to more give and take in a face to face meeting. I hope it won't be too long.

Very best regards,

Sincerely,

Maxine Singer